

As we celebrate Women's History Month, the courageous acts of the American heroines of 1913 should inspire us all to work to eliminate the gender inequalities that still exist in our society today. I join all Americans in celebrating the countless contributions of women to our Nation's history and culture and in working towards a more just and fair society for future generations of American women and girls.

REMEMBERING LORI ACTON

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, it is with deep regret and grief that I inform my fellow senators of the passing of my personal friend, Lori Acton. Mrs. Acton was a dynamic and dedicated woman whose absence in the community of Laurel County will be immediately and acutely felt.

Lori is someone who cannot be replaced. As the executive director of the Laurel County Public Library, she was a passionate leader who was visionary without being reckless, infectious without being frivolous, direct and driven without being rude or mean-spirited, and a tireless worker who fully enjoyed the life and work she participated in. Her work with the library spanned nearly three decades, but the impact of her influence and passion cannot be measured by the usual metrics. Indeed, as one local writer noted, "what people like Lori mean to a community cannot be seen by those who do not know her." She revolutionized the library system through hiring a stellar staff, instituting new, creative, and interesting programs, and constantly improving every issue she addressed.

Lori made an impact on people's lives. Not only did the library benefit from her enthusiastic approach to fostering a love of reading and learning, but her very presence and constant smile became signatures of her community. Countless testimonies from those who knew her speak to what an incredible impact she had as both a librarian and a friend.

At this time, I ask that we join together with the community of Laurel County, KY, in mourning the loss of my friend Mrs. Lori Acton. I believe that others can aspire to emulate Lori's character, enthusiasm, love and involvement with the community she lived in.

I also ask unanimous consent that an article lauding Lori from the Laurel County-area publication the Sentinel Echo appear in today's RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, January 30, 2013]
LAUREL LIBRARY DIRECTOR DIES MONDAY
(By Jeff Noble)

CORBIN.—For more than a quarter-century, Lori Acton gave people of all ages a window to the world and beyond by opening the doors to them at the Laurel County Public Library.

On Wednesday, her colleagues and friends remembered Acton as a passionate advocate for inspiring others through the library's staff, service, and outreach programs.

Acton, the library's district director since 1985, died Monday at her home in London. She was 57.

"The library was more than a job to Lori—it was her passion, and she worked tirelessly to make the library a place everyone could come and enjoy and learn. From babies to seniors, she wanted this library to offer whatever it could to enrich their lives and the community. We plan on working our hardest to make sure that Lori's vision to the future continues," the library's deputy director, Peggy Mereshon, said Wednesday.

Another who knew Acton said she was the driving force in moving the library from its 4th Street location to its present home on College Park Drive in London, which opened in 2003.

"Her visionary leadership, enthusiasm, and energy have been pivotal in creating a model of what a library can become in the 21st century," said R. W. Dyche III, president of the Laurel County Public Library's Board of Trustees.

In a phone interview Wednesday, Dyche said two traits made Acton stand out above the crowd.

"Number one, she was full of enthusiasm. Lori pursued all goals with enthusiasm. It was her determination that led directly to the opening of the new library. Second, she had a lot of strengths. One of them was she was not afraid to hire extremely talented people to work for her. She'll be remembered as a very happy person, so pleased to help people in Laurel and surrounding areas with their educational needs."

To honor her memory, the main library and their branches in Corbin and North London were closed Tuesday.

A picture of Acton, along with the dates of her birth and death in white letters over a black background, was posted on the home page of the library's website.

Kathryn Hardman was one of Acton's closest friends. Together the two worked on improving literacy in the county, and also were active in community activities as members of the London Rotary Club.

She said in a phone interview Wednesday the news of Acton's passing was still echoing over London and Laurel County.

"We're all pretty shocked. It's incomprehensible. She had a lot of friends in the community. She's been a vital part of our community for 28 years. The community mourns this loss," noted Hardman, who is the executive director of Laurel County Adult Education.

Hardman pointed out that because of Acton's direction, the library spearheaded the creation of the program in 1986 to promote adult literacy. Acton was also on the board of directors of the Saint Joseph London Foundation.

There were other roles in Acton's life. Hardman added, "Her most significant role was as mother, wife, daughter, sister, and friend."

"We've been having lunch for 25 years. We talked about our careers, our community, our nation, our families, and of course, politics. We both loved to talk about politics. It would be fair to say we both had strong opinions."

Acton's role as a Rotary member was extensive. At the time of her passing, she was looking forward to working on the annual Rotary International Dinner, a project Acton had headed for the past five years, and is sponsored by both the London and Corbin Rotary Clubs.

That passion Acton had with the library extended to her planning the dinner and to

helping worthy causes, said Corbin Rotary Club member the Rev. John Burkhardt.

"Lori had a lot of energy, high spirits, and she laughed a lot. She was very polite, sociable, and was an extraordinary Rotarian. She was lively, she'd ask a lot of questions to the speakers, and was very actively involved. Lori wasn't a wallflower."

Just before noon Wednesday, this message was posted on the library's Facebook page:

"Lori Acton had an unwavering passion for this library, always striving to give her community what she felt was needed and deserved. Her enthusiasm, leadership and commitment will be missed by all of us. Please remember her family and friends in your thoughts and prayers."

Several who knew Acton responded in kind. One person wrote, "Lori was a wonderful librarian and inspired me to become a librarian. I will miss seeing her on my visits home."

Another said, "I smile (through) my tears when I think of Lori. She just ALWAYS had a smile and a laugh when you saw her. Always making you feel real special. How I loved her passion for life."

Lori Holzworth Acton was a native of Sterling, Colorado, located northeast of Denver near the Wyoming border. She is survived by her husband and four children. Her mother, two sisters, and a brother also survive. Visitation is at 11 a.m. Saturday at House-RAWLINGS Funeral Home in London, with funeral services Saturday at 1 p.m. in the funeral home's chapel with the Rev. Wade Arp officiating. Burial will follow at A.R. Dyche Memorial Cemetery in London, with House-RAWLINGS Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

REMEMBERING JACK SIZEMORE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to reflect on the loss of Mr. Jack Sizemore, an exemplary citizen of Kentucky and a genuinely good man. Mr. Sizemore, of Laurel County, was laid to rest on February 12, 2013, and is survived by his wife, 7 children, 20 grand-children, 16 great-grandchildren, and two sisters.

The words, "let me tell you what Jack Sizemore did for me" are commonly heard in Jack's beloved town of London, and represent just how sorely his presence will be missed. His legacy of goodwill is firmly established after years working in the Laurel County Detention Center, as he chose to build a reputation as a jailer who "liked the job he was doing and [who] took care of the prisoners in a humane way and with the utmost courtesy." This testimony comes from his former supervisor Edd Parsley, who admits that "you don't find many men like that."

Jack was known to always have people laughing, and the community he loved so much has looked back and seen all the ways he touched their lives. The health problems that plagued his final years cannot begin to take attention away from his legacy and reputation.

At this time, I ask that my colleagues in this United States Senate join me in honoring Mr. Jack Sizemore. Along with our condolences to his friends and family, we simultaneously offer our gratitude and praise of this truly wonderful man.

I also ask unanimous consent that an article on the life and service of Mr. Jack Sizemore that appeared in the Laurel County-area publication the Sentinel Echo be included in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the following article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, February 15, 2013]

FORMER JAILER REMEMBERED AS 'GOOD MAN'

(By Nita Johnson)

LAUREL COUNTY, KENTUCKY.—A former Laurel County jailer, chief administrator of the jail, and deputy sheriff was laid to rest on Tuesday after ongoing health problems.

Jack Sizemore, 76, died Saturday at his home from frontotemporal dementia, which left him unable to communicate with others. Sizemore left a legacy of goodwill for his family, friends and co-workers.

Edd Parsley worked with Sizemore after Parsley was appointed as jailer in 1997. Sizemore stayed on as chief administrator of the Laurel County Detention Center when Parsley was elected to a four-year term as jailer.

"Jack worked for me for six years as chief administrator of the jail, and he was one of those people that if you told him to do something, you could very well rest assured that he would carry it out," Parsley said. "He liked the job he was doing and he took care of the prisoners in a humane way and with the utmost courtesy. You don't find many men like that."

Describing Sizemore as "a good man," Parsley reviewed Sizemore's background that made him invaluable at the jail.

"He was experienced in law enforcement. He was a deputy under several sheriffs," Parsley said. "He realized what had to be done and did it. He served this county well as a jailer, chief administrator and deputy."

Barb Rudder, who has worked in the booking department of the jail for nearly 20 years, said Sizemore was "a good person to work with."

"He always used to have people laughing and he would tell everyone that I was his babysitter."

After Sizemore retired, Rudder said she visited him during his illness the past two years.

"It's a sad loss for the community and for his family," she said.

That loss is indeed sad for Madgel Miller, who was one of Sizemore's stepchildren.

"Jack was my stepdad, but we didn't use 'step' in our family," Miller said. "He had seven kids, 20 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, some of whom were step. But step was never considered in the family."

Sizemore faced several health issues during the latter part of his life, Miller said, including a quadruple bypass in 2008.

"But he came through that very well and since he did, we were expecting him to have a long retirement."

But other health problems came with the frontotemporal dementia, which affects one's communication skills.

"It is a rare form of dementia, but he and my mother never had a problem communicating," she said. "He loved my mother unconditionally, and they had their own form of communicating."

But the past several months had taken its toll on the former jailer, and Miller said by Christmas, Sizemore was very ill.

"He had a rapid decline from it [dementia]. Last week, he had a real hard time of it, and my mother made a doctor's appointment for him," Miller added. "He was in the hospital Wednesday because the doctor said he was

weak and dehydrated. But he was able to walk in the hospital. He went home Friday and had a good night with family, and some friends came over. He couldn't communicate with us. He died in his sleep that night, with Mom and me beside him."

Choking back tears, Miller described Sizemore as a man with "a good heart" who was also "very intelligent."

Miller said many people had come to tell the family how Sizemore had touched their lives.

"It was good to hear people say, 'Let me tell you what Jack Sizemore did for me,' and it was stories that he never told. Jack was always telling stories, but these were about what he did for people," Miller said. "I remember when I was going to college, he would tell me, 'This is a good place to raise kids. This is a good place to live.' He loved this town."

Hearing the impact that her father had had on the people he dealt with during his lifetime, Miller said his opinion of Sizemore's goodwill towards others was reinforced.

"He was a very private person and didn't tell people about the dementia," she said. "He knew how to handle people and how to keep his own life private and personal. We made the arrangements quickly because he would rather be remembered in better times. Knowing Jack Sizemore, he would have had it no other way."

SHELBY COUNTY V. HOLDER

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in 2005, I was honored to join Congressman JOHN LEWIS on a trip to Selma, AL, for a ceremonial walk over the Edmund Pettus Bridge to mark the 40th anniversary of what has come to be known as "Bloody Sunday."

In March of 1965, Congressman LEWIS, Rev. Hosea Williams, and 600 other brave civil rights activists led a voting rights march over that bridge.

These courageous men, women, and children were marching for civil rights and voting rights. All they would receive that day, however, were beatings and bruises from police batons as they were turned back and chased down by State troopers.

A few days after "Bloody Sunday," President Johnson addressed the Nation and called on the House and the Senate to pass the Voting Rights Act.

Shortly thereafter, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law, guaranteeing that the fundamental right to vote would never again be canceled out by clever schemes—like poll taxes and literacy tests—devised to keep African Americans from voting.

The Voting Rights Act is the cornerstone of the civil rights movement and one of the most effective laws on the books when it comes to protecting the right to vote for all Americans.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Shelby County v. Holder*, a case challenging the constitutionality of section 5, which is the very heart of the Voting Rights Act.

That section requires jurisdictions in all or part of 16 States with a history of discrimination to get approval from the Department of Justice or a Federal court before making any changes to congressional districts or voting procedures.

This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has heard a challenge to the Voting Rights Act. Though it has been subject to four prior Supreme Court challenges, the Voting Rights Act has always emerged intact and on sound legal and constitutional ground.

Each of the four times that the Voting Rights Act has been reauthorized—in 1970, 1975, 1982, and most recently in 2006—Congress has done so with the broad bipartisan support and overwhelming majorities that are all too rare these days.

That is because protecting the right to vote should not be a partisan prerogative. It is not a Democratic or Republican issue. It is a fundamental right for every eligible voter, and it is a core value of our American democracy.

In 2006, the House of Representatives voted 390 to 33 in favor of reauthorizing the law. The Senate voted unanimously, 98 to 0, to reauthorize the law. And the final bill was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

There was good reason for this bipartisan support for reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act. Congress developed an extensive record, holding 21 hearings, reviewing more than 15,000 pages in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and hearing from more than 90 witnesses about the need to reauthorize the law.

Conservative Republican Congressman JIM SENSENBRENNER is one example. Congressman SENSENBRENNER was the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee when Congress reauthorized the Voting Rights Act. He strongly believes that section 5 is constitutional, and he has filed a brief asking the Supreme Court to uphold the law.

My hope is that the Supreme Court will look at the extensive evidence Congress reviewed in 2006 and defer to the judgment of an overwhelming majority of the House and a unanimous Senate.

The Court should affirm the constitutionality of this critical tool for protecting the right to vote.

We all acknowledge the progress that our great country has made on civil rights and voting rights issues. The current occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., is a symbol and timely reminder that our Nation has indeed grown to be more perfect—and more inclusive in many ways—than just a few generations ago.

We are not yet, however, a perfect union. And some of the jurisdictions covered by the Voting Rights Act have both a demonstrated history and a contemporary record of implementing discriminatory restrictions on voting.

The Voting Rights Act has been essential in securing the progress we have made as a nation over the last five decades.

And as my Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights found during a series of hearings last Congress, the Voting Rights Act remains a relevant and critical tool in protecting the right to vote.